

IN THE CLAIMS :

Please cancel claims 71 to 81 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein.

Please amend the following Claims:

-- 56. (Once Amended) An isolated proteinic mycobacterial antigen comprising 30 to 50 amino acids of a C-terminal portion of SEQ ID No. 19, or a variant of said 30 to 50 amino acids of said C-terminal portion of SEQ ID No. 19, or part of the last 50 amino acids in said C-terminal portion of SEQ ID No. 19, or a variant of said part of the last 50 amino acids in said C-terminal portion of SEQ ID No. 19, wherein said variant is obtained by addition, substitution or deletion of one or more amino acids and said antigen enables the adhesion of mycobacteria to the sulphated glucides of epithelial cells.

57. (Once Amended) The antigen according to claim 56, wherein the peptide sequence involved in the adhesion function is comprised in the following sequence:

KKAAPAKKAAPAKKAAPAKKAAAKKAPAKKAAAKKVTQK (SEQ ID No. 1)

or any portion or variant of this sequence enabling mycobacteria to adhere to host cells and obtained by addition, substitution or deletion of one or more amino acids of said peptide sequence.

58. (Once Amended) The antigen according to claim 56, wherein said antigen is obtainable from *M. bovis* BCG or *M. tuberculosis*.

59. (Once Amended) The antigen according to claim 56, wherein said proteinic mycobacterial antigen is recognized by the monoclonal antibodies 4057 D2 (deposited at the CNCM under the number CNCM I-2901) and 3921 E4 (deposited at the CNCM under the number CNCM I-2900).

60. (Once Amended) A recombinant peptide sequence which is obtainable by expression in a host cell of a polynucleotide sequence of SEQ ID No. 19, and

wherein said recombinant peptide sequence is an HBHA mycobacterial antigen enabling the adhesion of mycobacteria to the sulphated glucides of epithelial cells.

61. (Once Amended) The peptide sequence according to claim 60, wherein the polynucleotide sequence is obtained from *M. bovis* BCG or *M. tuberculosis*.

62. (Once Amended) The peptide sequence according to claim 60, wherein said peptide sequence is recognized by a monoclonal antibody 3921 E4 (deposited at the CNCM under the number CNCM I-2900) and is not recognized by a monoclonal antibody 4057 D2 (deposited at the CNCM under the number CNCM I-2901).

63. (Once Amended) The recombinant peptide sequence according to claim 60, wherein said recombinant peptide sequence comprises all or a portion of the last 50 amino acids of the C-terminal extremity of SEQ ID No. 19, or a variant thereof, wherein said variant is obtained by addition, substitution or deletion of one or more amino acids and said variant retains adhesion properties.

64. (Twice Amended) The peptide sequence according to claim 60, wherein said host cell is a mycobacterium.

66. (Twice Amended) A reactant for detecting an anti-HBHA antibody in a biological fluid consisting of:

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- a) an HBHA protein purified from a preparation of mycobacterium cell walls, or a fragment thereof, determined by epitope mapping; or
 - b) a fragment comprised in the last 30 to 50 amino acids in a C-terminal portion of said HBHA protein or in the last 50 C-terminal amino acids of SEQ ID No. 19; or
 - c) a recombinant peptide sequence according to claim 60.

67. (Once Amended) The reactant according to claim 66, wherein said recombinant peptide sequence c) is expressed in a mycobacterium.